

Contributions

THE BOOK OF JONAH

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Our last communication left the prophet in the loyal work of delivering his message to Nineveh. This will note the effect of the message on the doomed city and how the prophet was affected thereby.

The interesting narrative records the fact that "the people believed God, proclaimed a fast, put on sackcloth, sat in ashes and turned from their evil ways" and how God "repented of the evil that he said that he would do unto them and that he did it not." Several most instructive lessons are herein taught.

1. That "belief in God" is the one condition of his favor. By it Nineveh was saved; without it Sodom was destroyed. By it we are saved; without it we are to be lost. Belief inspires obedience. The absence of obedience is proof conclusive that belief is absent. As this doctrine relates to our day and generation we logically conclude that resistance to the commands of Christ relative to baptism, the washing of the Saints' feet, the Lord's Supper, the communion of the Holy elements, furnish unmistakable evidence that we are fatally deficient in saving belief. Saving belief leads to action.

2. That we can turn God from just and righteous anger by humiliation, fasting and prayer, and turning from our evil ways. The effect of the divine clemency on Jonah, in that he became exceedingly angry with God when he saw that Nineveh was not destroyed was most reprehensible. In the estimation of the Christian sentiment of this age of the world such an act would have been condemned to the lowest stage of savagery. It would seem that the sight of an outpouring of floods of fire and brimstone on those suppliant people would have filled him with exquisite delight; that their pitiful cries for mercy and the agony of tortured flesh would have been harmony to his ears. What a brutal heart he must have possessed. And all because God would save repentant sinners, he even prayed that God would take his own life. That God did not answer his prayer only emphasizes the infinite compassion.

After he had finished his message he tramped out of the city, evidently in a sulky mood, and gathering together a lot of material he constructed a temporary booth to shield himself from the hot rays of a tropical sun and sat thereunder to watch the tragic death of sixty thousand innocent children and five times that number of repentant adults. And when he had watched in vain for the fire from heaven to devour them, as the excited and angry disciples of Christ

did 2000 years later, he reproached God for not executing the awful judgment which he had just proclaimed. This teaches us the important truth, which it seems we are slow to learn, viz., that God will save very many persons who do not belong to our denominational family. From the way we, as a denomination, are disfavored it would appear to bring special affliction to our separated brethren if God's infinite mercy should not avail to embrace us within the pale of salvation.

Let us profit by the instructive lessons the book of Jonah teaches and a large measure of the heavenly grace will come to us all.

FUTURE HOPES

The following is the essay read by Florence Whitmer, a common school graduate, who was at the time the president of the Junior Y. P. S. C. E. of Milford, Indiana.

We know what the past has been, what the present is, but we know not what the future will bring forth; so we have but to hope what it may be. "The hope of the righteous shall be gladness; but the expectation of the wicked shall perish. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we thru patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

Hope! Hope, that beacon light which leaves the child at play, the youth in castle building, the young man and maiden in contemplating a bright future, the fond to see the babe a great man; and the consolation of all in declining years. Hope is the light of our souls. If it were not for hope there would be many more precious souls go down to destruction on the path of despair. Or they would destroy the fame which has followed the generations for many years, ending life all because they have no hope for the future.

All hopes are not for the best altho they should be. Some hope for the disadvantage of some neighbor or friend or for the ruination of some soul; but such hopes should not exist. There are persons who hope that the character of their enemy may be destroyed, but such hopes are not worthy of notice. It is hope that revives the spirit of some poor mother when her child lies on its death-bed. Hope tells her of a meeting in the eternal haven of rest. When a son or daughter has strayed from their mother's bosom they have often wished afterwards that they might have courage to return and lead a better life. It is hope that prompts such a desire.

The youth looks forward to the time when he or she may be situated in some

very honorable position. One which gives fame to those who occupy it. And as they grow older and realize the necessity of deciding upon some future occupation they will then begin to work upon the hopes which they have already had. The rich man hopes that he may devise a plan by which he may gain a larger per cent. than before: that his investments may be better than those of others. The hope of the poor man is that of becoming better situated in life and that he may enjoy peace and comfort. The patriot's hope is for the advancement of his country—to make laws which are necessary and see that they are fully enforced. We have a long list of patriots in our histories who have given their time and money, and some of them have given their lives that we might enjoy liberty and peace.

The Christian's hope is the most important one. It is one which raises fallen humanity and does all in its power to have a peaceful nation. Their aim is for eternal life or a life beyond the tomb, which hope we all ought to have.

George Washington, in his youth, would amuse himself by playing war with his associates. He would be the captain while his companions would be his soldiers. He always hoped to be the captain of some great army, and a man of fame and honor. And his hope was fulfilled for he is the "Father of our Country." It was he who led in the early wars and won peace and liberty from the nations. The people of the United States elected him the first president which honor he deserved. So by following his youthful hope he received praise and tributes of honor from all nations. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, thru the power of the Holy Ghost."

"Of all the myriad moods of mind
That thru the soul come thronging,
Which one was e'er so dear, so kind,
So beautiful as longing?
The thing we long for, that we are
For one transcendent moment.
Before the present, poor and bare
Can make its sneering comment.
Longing is God's fresh heavenward will
With our poor earthward striving:
We quench it that we may be still
Content with merely living;
But, would we learn that heart's full scope
Which we are hourly wronging,
Our lives must climb from hope to hope
And realize our longing."

CHURCH STATISTICS

J. L. GILLIN

I have promised the readers of the EVANGELIST a few articles on the report of last year, as it appeared in the paper which I read to the conference at Warsaw, Indiana.

The reports were not generally filled out as fully as I desired, because of two classes of reasons, which are represent-